lent reaction against them, as we have said, led by the palace eunuchs, ousted them and killed many of their number. While during the brief remaining course of the dynasty they did not regain their former influence, the Confucian tradition was by that time too firmly established to disappear and whatever the bias of individual rulers—often Taoist or Buddhist—the state was henceforth built on what were largely (but by no means entirely) Confucian principles. This official Han Confucianism, it will be recalled, was in many respects quite different from that of the Sage and his immediate disciples and was influenced by Taoism, Mo Ti and his followers, and the Legalist School.

Why Confucianism should have been selected from among its rivals for imperial favor must be in part a matter of conjecture. Although his religious views seem to have made a deep impress upon both Confucianism and Taoism, Mo Ti's statecraft was probably held to be impracticable; the Taoist political theories may have been too incompatible with the complex civilization which was developing; and the severe reaction against the thoroughgoing application of Legalist principles by Shih Huang Ti and the opposition to them under Han Wu Ti and his successors may have discredited that school. The ritualism advocated by the Confucian school provided the forms for the type of civilized life to which the Chinese were traditionally accustomed. Moreover, they enhanced the prestige of the Emperor, a result which commended itself to the Han monarchs.

At the risk of being wearisome, however, it must be repeated that the Chinese state system of the Han and succeeding dynasties owed a debt not only to Confucianism but to others of

the schools of the Chou. In it were elements traceable to the Legalists, the Taoists, and the Mohists. The Confucianism of the Later Han was in many respects a syncretic product to which all of the major schools of the Chou contributed.

In establishing this composite Confucianism as the leading philosophy of the state and making its texts the subject of study in the schools of the Empire and the basis of civil service examinations, the Han monarchs were promoting the cultural unity of their domains. The very syncretism which so characterized the Han—as contrasted with the distinct philosophic divisions of Chou times—both reflected and contributed to the political and